

VZCZCXRO1646
OO RUEHFL RUEHKW RUEHLA RUEHROV
DE RUEHCP #0050/01 0380948
ZNY SSSSS ZZH
O 070948Z FEB 08
FM AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN
TO RUEHC/SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 4044
INFO RHEHNSC/NSC WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEAIIA/CIA WASHDC IMMEDIATE
RUEKJCS/SECDEF WASHINGTON DC IMMEDIATE
RUEHZL/EUROPEAN POLITICAL COLLECTIVE PRIORITY

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 COPENHAGEN 000050

SIPDIS

NOFORN
SIPDIS

STATE FOR EUR/NB

E.O. 12958: DECL: 02/07/2018
TAGS: [PREL](#) [PTER](#) [PGOV](#) [DA](#)
SUBJECT: DANISH GOVERNMENT AVOIDS PARLIAMENTARY INQUIRY ON
CIA FLIGHTS

REF: COPENHAGEN 38

Classified By: Ambassador James P. Cain, reasons 1.4b,d

¶1. (S/NF) Summary: The Danish parliament voted February 7 to support a government internal review of alleged CIA flights through Danish airspace (reftel), rather than establish an independent investigation as demanded by opposition and Greenlandic officials. Foreign Minister Per Stig Moller and Justice Minister Lene Espersen signaled that the government takes seriously the issues raised by the recent documentary, while stating that U.S. assurances about torture and respect for sovereignty remain in effect and that Danish intelligence has no knowledge of alleged CIA operations here. Our exchanges with senior Danish MFA officials indicate that the government, though concerned, believes the issue can be managed and that conversations with us here and in Washington have been helpful. For now, no further response -- particularly public -- is sought from us. End summary.

¶2. (S/NF) In preparation for February 6 parliamentary debate on allegations of CIA flights transiting Greenland, ostensibly as part of renditions operations, the Danish government spoke with us to draw out a confirmation of earlier U.S. assurances on torture, respect for sovereignty and adherence to international legal conventions. MFA U/S Michael Zilmer-Johns explained to the DCM that Danish Ambassador Friis Arne Petersen's call to EUR PDAS Volker was part of that effort, allowing FM Moller to inform parliament that the government had discussed the issue with us. Zilmer-Johns noted pointedly that Ambassador Petersen had not been instructed, however, to ask us for additional public comment, observing that U.S. public statements could hinder Danish efforts to quiet the controversy. Significantly, the MFA reportedly also demarched other EU governments on their own handling of the renditions issue, suggesting a nascent effort to coordinate approaches.

¶3. (S) In a rare departure from practice on intelligence matters (usually discussed in closed session), Justice Minister Espersen during the debate read a statement from Danish intelligence (PET) stating that it had no knowledge of CIA flights. The PET, she said, "does not recognize" media accounts suggesting that it had advance knowledge of such activities from the U.S. or that it had somehow sanctioned them. Prior to this, Danish authorities sought to sound us out, in liaison channels, about any specific information we might have shared with them previously. In her remarks, Espersen ruled out any stepped-up inspections of transiting aircraft -- as proposed by the Greenlanders -- stating that all such inspections must adhere to existing rules mandating probable cause.

14. (SBU) In response to these declarations, the Danish opposition withdrew its proposal for an independent investigation and allowed an alternative, government-sponsored measure to pass unopposed. The final resolution states that, "The Folketing (parliament) determines that Danish, Greenlandic or Faroese territory must not be used in violation of international conventions. The Folketing notes with satisfaction that the Government, in cooperation with Greenland and the Faroe Islands, will review new information to the effect that CIA flights have been conducted in Danish and Greenlandic territory, and will assume contact with the American authorities in this respect."

15. (S/NF) Comment: Though accustomed to dealing with this issue (accepting our general assurances, not pressing on details, and seeking to manage the domestic politics as quietly as possible), the Danish government in this case feels especially pressed because of the Greenlandic dimension. The Greenlanders, currently embroiled in negotiations with the government over sharing of oil and gas revenue, may have other reasons for pushing the renditions issue, but -- whatever their motivation -- the Greenlanders' protestations represent a new and uncertain element. The upcoming visit of Prime Minister Anders Fogh Rasmussen to Crawford has also raised the anxiety level for the Danes; indeed, the issue may show up on the prime minister's agenda, if only so he will be able to say that he raised it with the President. Today's vote should ease that apprehension. The CIA flights issue is one that will perhaps never go away entirely, but the government's success in calming the critics and avoiding an independent inquiry should give the Danes some breathing room for now.

COPENHAGEN 00000050 002 OF 002

CAIN